

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 478

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 9213

FOL TEL SENT ADDIS ABABA FROM ASMARA AUGUST 5TH
REPEATED YOU:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0621

FOR CHARGE FROM SLUTZ

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, MILI, ET
SUBJECT: VISIT TO SECOND DIVISION HEADQUARTERS

REF: (A) ASMARA 0606, (B) ASMARA 0598

1. RECENT ARRIVAL OF NEW RESIDENT MANAGER FOR CISCO (FORMER OIC OF NAVCOMMUNIT) WAS OCCASION FOR OIC AND MANAGER TO CALL ON COL. TELEHUN, CO OF 2ND DIV. IN MANNER SIMILAR TO THAT REPORTED IN REFTTEL B, PARA.2, TELEHUN AGAIN EXHIBITED CORDIAL, CONFIDENT AIR AND APPEARED GENUINELY PLEASED TO RECEIVE AMERICAN VISITORS. AT URGING OF TELEHUN, CALL WAS EXTENDED BEYOND LIMITS OF NORMAL COURTESY CALL.

2. VISIT TOOK PLACE ON THIRD DAY (AUG 3) AFTER ARRIVAL IN ASMARA OF NEW REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR COL. FIKRU. GENERAL ATMOSPHERE AT 2ND DIV HQS AND ACTIONS OF HQS STAFF SEEMED FAR MORE RELAXED THAN RECENTLY OBSERVED. OFFICERS WERE BACK IN WORK KHAKIS RATHER THAN BATTLE FATIGUE UNIFORMS AND WITHOUT SIDEARMS, AND GENERAL
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APPEARANCE OF HQS WAS ONE OF NORMAL BUSINESS IN CONTRAST TO

TENSE, NERVOUS, UNCERTAIN CLIMATE OF PAST MONTH.

3. COMMENT: CIRCUMSTANCES OF VISIT ARE HEREIN REPORTED SOLELY TO ILLUSTRATE THE SIGNIFICANT AND NOTICEABLE CHANGE IN ATTITUDES AND ENVIRONMENT AT 2ND DIV HQS OVER THAT REPORTED IN REFTELS. TELEHUN, WHO IS A PROFESSIONAL CHAMELEON, SEEMED TO BE REFLECTING HIS UNDERSTANDING OF A SHIFT IN APPROACH TO AMERICANS HERE AND DELIBERATELY SIGNALLING THAT FACT TO HIS VISITORS. IN CONTRAST TO MEETINGS OF RECENT MEMORY, TELEHUN'S CONVERSATION DURING 30-40 MINUTE MEETING WAS REplete WITH REFERENCES TO THE US, AMERICANS, AND THINGS AMERICAN, RECALLING FONDLY HIS EXPERIENCES IN THE US. HE SPECIFICALLY CALLED ATTENTION TO HIS RECENT REVERSION TO DRINKING COFFEE, WHICH HE ENJOYS, RATHER THAN TEA WHICH HE DISLIKES AND REFERS TO AS CHINESE, BUT HAD BEEN DRINKING PERSISTENTLY IN RECENT MONTHS. HIS RELIEF WAS OBVIOUS. I HESITATE TO READ DEEP MEANING IN A MAN WHO IS ESSENTIALLY SHALLOW, BUT HE HAS BEEN USEFUL TO US IN THE PAST AS A POLITICAL WEATHERVANE, AND HIS PRESENT CHEERFUL, COMFORTABLE AURA SUGGESTS THAT HE AT LEAST IS NOW SURE OF HIS COURSE OF ACTION IN DEALING WITH US. I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT FIKRU'S ARRIVAL IS CLOSELY TIED INTO THIS CHANGE BUT AS YET HAVE NOTHING CONCRETE TO BASE THIS ON. REQUEST COMMENT ON ANY PERCEPTIBLE CHANGE IN ATTITUDES IN DEALING WITH AMERICANS IN ADDIS.

4. YOU MAY AT YOUR DISCRETION WISH REPEAT THIS MESSAGE AND REFTELS AS PACKAGE TO OTHER ADDRESSEES.

SLUTZ

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